~~Declared by CIA on 86-2600~~ by Carl Richardson

[redacted]

[redacted]

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

FROM : John H. Waller
Inspector General

SUBJECT : Washington Star Story, 1 October 1976

1. This is for your information only.

2. On 1 October 1976 the Washington Star published a news story with an Associated Press credit line, headlined CIA Viewed Oswald As Information Source (copy attached). The lead stated:

> Contrary to sworn testimony, the CIA once considered using presidential assassin Lee Harvey Oswald as a source of intelligence information about the Soviet Union, according to a newly released CIA document.
>
> In sworn testimony before the Warren Commission, former CIA Director Richard Helms said the Agency never had "or even contemplated" any contacts with Oswald.

The news story, in another section, made the following statement:

> The November 25, 1963, memo explained that the Agency's interest in Oswald as a potential intelligence source was due to his "unusual behavior in the USSR," to which he had defected in 1959.

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[redacted]

3. There was such a memorandum, written by a case officer then stationed [redacted], recently released under FOIA. Writing three days after President Kennedy's assassination, this case officer recalled that there had been interest in Oswald.

> As soon as I had heard Oswald's name, I recalled that as [redacted] I had discussed -- sometime in the summer of 1960 -- with [redacted] the laying on of interview (s) through [redacted] or other suitable channels . . .
>
> I remember that Oswald's unusual behavior in the USSR had struck me from the moment I had read
> STATE the first [redacted] dispatch on him, and I told my subordinates something amounting to "Don't push too hard to get the information we need, because this individual looks odd."
>
> . . . . I do not know what action developed thereafter . . . .

4. The Helms testimony before the Warren Commission on this subject was as follows:

> Mr. Helms. On Mr. McCone's behalf, I had all our records searched to see if there had been any contacts at any time prior to President Kennedy's assassination by anyone in the Central Intelligence Agency with Lee Harvey Oswald. We checked our card files and our personal files and all our records.
>
> Now this check turned out to be negative. In addition I got in touch with those officers who were in positions of responsibility at the times in question to see if anybody had any recollection of any contact having even been suggested with this man. This also turned out to be negative, so there is no material in the Central Intelligence Agency, either in the records or in the mind of any of the individuals, that there was any contact had or even contemplated with him.

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5. Mr. Helms did state exactly the words quoted in the news story -- "or even contemplated." But the context of those words was what was reported to him as the result of a search of records and memories. To this day those familiar with the extensive Oswald records state that there is no reflection in those records that anyone even undertook to propose or approve a contact with Oswald. It would have been natural to do so, but apparently any such thoughts did not progress to formal action. From the memorandum quoted, it is apparent that someone at Branch level did think about it, even if nothing ever came of it. This hardly constitutes a responsible or official or serious "contemplation" of the idea. Mr. Helms' full statement on this point seems literally correct in the full context of his statement, although more refined qualifications might have reiterated the basis for his conclusions. The news story is misleading on this point.

6. The news story statement that Oswald was considered due to his "unusual behavior in the USSR," is exactly the opposite of the statements of the quoted memorandum, which reported the care that should be used if Oswald were approached, because of his strange conduct.

7. The statement in the news story about Mr. Dulles consulting with Agency personnel on how to answer questions is basically true. The interpretation to be placed on this counselling will depend on the interpreter. The inference of the news story is that Mr. Dulles was counselling slanted responses on the Oswald issue, thereby tending to reinforce the interpretation of deception attributed to Mr. Helms.

[redacted] John H. Waller

Attachment:
As Stated
cc: DDCI w/atts
DIG: [redacted] 6 October 1976
Distribution:
Orig w/atts - Addressee
1 w/atts - DDCI
1 w/atts - ER
1 w/atts [redacted]
1 w/atts [redacted]
1 w/atts [redacted]

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